

The Monongalia Mirror

A Family Newspaper—Independent of Party or Sect—Devoted to News, Literature, Agriculture, and sound Morality.

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Poor's Corner.

WINTER TO THE POOR.

THE author of these beautiful lines is the
graceful poetess, E. C. K., wife of the American
Charge to Sardinia, who writes amidst the gay-
ety and splendor of the Court of Turin, to the
Newark Daily, showing that the poor still occu-
py a prominent place in her heart:—

Stormy winter comes again,
Bringing snow, and hail, and rain,
Beating 'gainst the window pane,
Rudely knocking at the door!
Boreas holds to-night a rout—
See the shutter bolted stout,
Fasten all the doors about,
Stormy winter is without—
God have mercy on the poor!

On the poor, half-died in shreds,
Through whose low and leaky sheds
Snows beat down on aching heads,
Pillowed on the naked floor;
He that looks may there behold,
Side by side, the young and old,
Shivering arms the lake enfold—
Oh! how dreadful is the cold—
God have mercy on the poor!

See the famished infant, press'd
To the fond, but empty breast,
While the mother bends distress'd,
Drooping tears upon the floor;
Thou who hear'st the wailing cry,
Hark! how low with pining eye,
Send them manna from the sky,
Or bid their bread supply—
God have mercy on the poor!

Hark! the storm is raging yet—
Who beside his fire can sit,
And the sufferer sigh,
Shivering on the frozen moor?
Ye, who downy pillows press,
Ye, whose limbs soft robes caress,
Pity and relieve distress!
Oh! the storm is pitiless—
God have mercy on the poor!

A NEW YEAR SONG.

—Tune—Bruce's Address.

Boys who've signed the temperance chart!
Girls who hate the spoiler's art!
All who're right in head and heart,
Come join us in our glee!

Now's the day and now's the hour,
To tell the world that deists cover,
That Maine has crippled Belial's power,
Shouting Victory!

Shall we to the tyrant bow?
Shall we rest in bondage now?
No! with the grit that nerved Neal Dow,
Strike for Liberty!

Breathes there one with soul so dead,
Who never to his friend has said,
"Behold the woe that runs his head,
To the rescue flee!"

Where is he who has not traced
The mind dethroned, the force defaced,
The man in all his parts debased?
Let him turn and see!

If children starved, and weeping wive,
And homes where nought of peace survives,
Are not the woe that hell contrives,
What is misery?

Death to him that turns the brain,
Wastes the body, feeds the vein;
Away, ye fends of fashion's train,
Wine and agony!

Now, at the dawn of this New Year,
Maine's glorious standard high we rear,
Its flag to float till our career
Crown the Jubilee.

Horns!—unto the breach we rush,
No compromise our voice can hush—
The entire dragon we must crush—
Who would traitors be?

By the glorious spark that glows
In Kossuth's breast, to breathe his foes,
By all the hope his spirit knows,
Nerer yield will we.

By the warrior's heart-felt throes,
By the orphan's tale of woe,
By the countless hosts laid low,
We'll not bend the knee.

By the joy that thrills through Maine,
By the thousand's snatched from pain,
By the dawn now raised again,
Freemen shall be free!

England and the United States—Even
the London Times, which no one
can accuse of being too democratic in
its tendencies denounces Louis Napo-
leon in the most powerful language.
That paper shadows forth the opinion
that war in Europe is now inevitable,
and the last number casts longing eyes
towards America as the land from
whence must come the rescue.

Our country has hitherto been ignored,
but just now the Times has made
discovery that we are a great peo-
ple and that in the course of a few
years the United States will be the most
powerful nation on the globe. The
news that at last "among the proph-
ets" it is an ominous thing when
a war anticipates a time of war
in Europe, from which the
United States alone is saved by our as-
surance. A sudden compliments are
sent to us.—N. Y. Organ.

Governor's Message.

To the General Assembly of Virginia:

GENTLEMEN:—The circumstances under
which you have convened and organized
are of no ordinary character. Since the
adjournment of the late General Assembly
many, and it is confidently hoped, benefi-
cial reforms have taken place in the or-
ganic law of the State. We are in the
dawn of a new era. The convention, which
assembled in the capitol on the 14th day
of October, 1850, in pursuance of laws en-
acted by your predecessors, "to consider
discuss and propose a new constitution,
or alterations and amendments to the ex-
isting constitution of the Commonwealth,"
terminated its labors on the first day of
August last; and the instrument which
was the work of its hands was on the
fourth Thursday of October, adopted by
the citizens suffragans of the State as the
CONSTITUTION OF VIRGINIA, by a majority
amounting almost to unanimity. What a
sublime spectacle is here exhibited! How
strikingly does it illustrate the beautiful
theory and practice of representative re-
publican government! With what un-
bounded confidence it should inspire the
friends of such a government, and with
what awe and reverence it can but im-
press its enemies! Our beloved common-
wealth has just passed through a revolu-
tion, instantaneous and radical in its
character, operating upon and affecting every
class and condition of society, and yet all
is peaceful and quiet within her borders.
It was not the achievement of the sword,
its pathway is not traced by the blood of
the citizen, no desolated kingdom wit-
nesses its triumph, and no emblem of
glory adorns the military chieftain. In the
first days of our republic it was ordained
as a part of the basis and foundation of
government, that when it should be found
inadequate or contrary to the purposes for
which it was created, "a majority of the
community hath an indubitable, unalien-
able and indefeasible right to reform, alter
or abolish it, in such manner as shall be
judged most conducive to the public weal."

And in accordance with this wholesome
and wise provision of free government,
incorporated in the organic law of our
State by the patriot statesmen by whom it
was founded and recognized and acknowl-
edged by their descendants, the civilians
of our own times looked to the councils of
the State instead of the tented field for
the redress of grievances under which
they lived. The people willed a change
of government, and it was made; and now
it remains for you, the representatives of
their choice, in your legislative capacity,
to perfect and carry into practical opera-
tion this new system. Its merits were e-
laborately and ably discussed in the con-
vention which framed it; and more re-
cently its several provisions have been
thoroughly canvassed and considered by
every section, county and neighborhood
of the Commonwealth. It is unnecessary,
therefore, that any eulogy should be passed
upon such of its features as may be
considered conducive of good, or that the
evil tendencies, whether real or imaginary
of other provisions should be made at this
time the subject of comment. It may not
however, be improper to express the opin-
ion that the friends of reform and of a truly
representative republican form of gov-
ernment will never have cause to regret
the change. The unanimity with which
it has been sanctioned by the people of
the State, is well calculated to inspire its
friends with an abiding confidence in its
merits, and gives assurance that, on your
part, individual prejudices, that on your
part, individual prejudices, that each will
exist, will be forgotten, and that each will
vie with each other in the advocacy and
adoption of such laws as may be required
to give it efficacy in its operation.

The distinguished ability with which
the Executive department of the government
has been conducted by the statesmen of
our own and former times, and the proud
position and merited fame of our judi-
ciary, exhibit in a forcible light, the wisdom
and fidelity with which the duty of elect-
ing these officers has been discharged by
your predecessors for a period of nearly
three-quarters of a century. The new
constitution relieves you of this important
and weighty responsibility, and transfers
to the suffragans of the State, the right to
elect the executive and judicial, as well
as the Legislative officers. This new fea-
ture in our organic law, excited the ap-
prehensions of some as to its practical
operation. But with the experience before
us of some of our sister states that have
adopted this principle, and remembering
the moral and intellectual character of our
fellow-citizens, and the high sense of hon-
or which has ever characterized the Vir-
ginia people, it is confidently believed that
with the experience of a few years, the
fears of the most timid reformer will be
dispelled, the prejudices of those most
wedded to ancient customs will be re-
moved, and confidence in the wisdom and
integrity of the great body of the people
will take the place of distrust, in the
minds of those who fear that political and
other causes may endanger the healthful
exercise of this power on the part of the
people. By our present system, that iden-
tity of interest and reciprocity of feeling
which should always exist between the
representative and the constituent, will
be maintained; the officer, holding under
the immediate and voluntary suffrage of
those who are directly and most deeply
interested in a faithful discharge of his
duties, will be inspired with confidence in
his position, and a fearlessness in the dis-
charge of the functions of his office; and
the people, conscious of the great respon-
sibility with which they are clothed, will
feel a lively interest in the subject, com-
pare opinions, and elicit information from
every source. And thus, whilst the exer-
cise of this power will unite and endow
more closely the citizen and his govern-
ment, it will enlighten and elevate the
masses upon whose intellectual, moral and
political education, depends the sta-
bility of a representative government.—
When we consider the many innumerable
advantages which must inevitably accrue
to the suffragan by extending to him the
right to elect to office the men of his own

choice, it must be to you a source of un-
feigned gratulation that another provision
of our new Constitution extends the ben-
efits resulting from the exercise of the e-
lective franchise to a large and respect-
able class of our citizens, who heretofore
have been driven from the polls, and whose
poverty appears to have been their only
fault. That Virginia should have so long
retained this exclusive and anti-democratic
feature in her State government, and that
this numerous class of citizens should have
been acquiescent in it up to this time, is
another striking illustration of the fact,
that "man kind are more disposed to suffer
while evils are sufferable, than to right
themselves by abolishing the forms to
which they are accustomed," and proof
conclusive that our people, though ac-
quainted with and jealous of their political
rights, are nevertheless pre-eminently
a law-abiding people, and unwilling to
seek constitutional reform by other than
constitutional means.

I herewith transmit you a copy of the
new constitution, from which it will be
seen that many subjects embraced in it
will require legislation on your part to
give it efficiency and effect. It makes it
your duty to cause every city or town, the
population of which exceeds five thousand
to be laid off into convenient wards, and
establish in each a separate place of vot-
ing—to district the counties for the elec-
tion of justices of the peace, and to divide
the State into three districts for the elec-
tion of a "Board of Public Works" by the
people. How these wards and county and
State districts shall be laid off—whether
immediately by the Legislature or by com-
missioners appointed for the purpose, will
be a subject for your consideration and de-
cision. I cannot dismiss the subject, how-
ever, without congratulating you upon the
fact that these are the only geographical
divisions provided for in the organic law
of our government, and they are not po-
litical in their character. Those arbitrary
lines by which the State has heretofore
been laid off into political divisions and
districts, were unnecessary and unwise in
their conception and only productive of
pernicious results. These lines are now
obliterated. And though our magnificent
mountains traverse the State from one ex-
tremity to the other, they are no longer
assumed to divide a people having com-
mending interests and a separate destiny.
Henceforth the Blue Ridge will not form
a dividing line between the East and the
West; the Valley and Piedmont, the
Valley and Trans-Allegheny are united by
indissoluble bonds, and with a common
interest and a common destiny, we shall
know no East, no West, but all shall be
VIRGINIA.

I cannot too strongly recommend the
adoption of such measures as will effect
a speedy organization of the new Board of
Public Works. The interests of the State
require it, and particularly that great and
growing interest over which this board is
designed to take control. At an early day,
before our government had become so
deeply interested in the subject, a board
was organized by the appointment of com-
missioners taken from different sections
of the State. These commissioners resided
at points remote from the capitol, and the
board thus organized was found to be
expensive and inefficient. Commissioners
were dispensed with, and after several
changes made at different times in its or-
ganization, the duties of the board devolved
upon the Governor, Register of Land
Office, Treasurer and first and second Au-
ditors. At that time the business of the
board was inconsiderable, and could, with-
out inconvenience, be discharged by these
State officers. But now, while the busi-
ness of each department of the govern-
ment has been greatly increased, requiring
more attention and labor on the part of
those who preside over them, the subject of
internal improvements has become a most
important and complicated interest, and
demands more attention from those under
whose control it is now placed than their
other engagements will permit them to
devote to its duties. By prompt and ef-
ficient action on your part, upon this sub-
ject, you will relieve these officers of this
burden, and enable them to devote more
of their time and labor to the other im-
portant subjects that claim their attention,
and, at the same time, place this already
important and growing interest in the
hands of others who, having no other du-
ties to divide their time or occupy their
attention, will be the better enabled to
devote to the subject their whole energies
which its merits would so richly justify
and which its wants so imperiously de-
mand.

The annual report of the Board of Pub-
lic Works is herewith communicated.—
Your attention is specially invited to the
statistical information and the many val-
uable suggestions contained therein.

While a wisely directed government, in
most cases, will find it necessary to leave
the various branches of industry to the
guidance and control of individual enter-
prise, the agricultural interest of our State
is of such paramount importance, that it
may well claim the serious attention of
your body. Whether we consider the vast
amount of capital invested and the num-
ber of our citizens engaged in this pursuit,
and who depend upon it alone for their
subsistence, or, in a national point of view,
look to the benefits which must result from
its successful prosecution and the evils
which must flow from its neglect—the
high claims of this department of labor
upon your attention and fostering care
will be apparent to all. The General As-
sembly, at an early day, devised and es-
tablished an educational fund, the annual
proceeds of which, amounting at this
time to the sum of \$101,015 22, is chiefly
devoted to the advancement of elemen-
tary education in primary schools. And
liberal appropriations and loans, amount-
ing in effect to donations, have, from time
to time, been made from the Literary fund
and the treasury of the State to the higher
grades of schools and colleges through-
out the Commonwealth, for the promotion
of education in the other departments of
Science. Why, then, should agriculture,
the most important, and in our State, the
most neglected branch of education, be
made an exception? England, and other

European States, have sufficiently and
successfully tested the efficiency of gov-
ernmental aid in the promotion of agri-
cultural science. Some of our sister States
have extended to this branch of industry
their fostering care with the most bene-
ficial results; and why should Virginia re-
fuse to join in this march of agricultural
progress? Voluntary associations and in-
dividual skill, unaided by the government,
have already tested in different sections
of the Commonwealth the practical effi-
ciency of agricultural science in reclaim-
ing our wasted and worn-out lands, and in
making our own soil more productive.—
This science is no longer an untried ex-
periment. The increased value of the
lands lying in the Tide Water district, as
exhibited by the returns of the recent as-
sessment, vindicates the science, and ap-
peals strongly to you for aid and encour-
agement in its behalf. In 1819 the lands
in this district were valued in the aggre-
gate at the sum of \$71,406,997; and in
1838 at \$80,704,053 20, exhibiting a de-
crease in value, during the 19 years that
intervened, to the enormous amount of
\$10,592,943 791. And yet those same
lands were recently assessed at the sum
of \$77,964,574 52, showing an increase in
their value during the last twelve years
of \$17,260,521 31.

This remarkable and gratifying change
in the value of these lands cannot be at-
tributed, to any great extent, to benefits
resulting from works of internal improve-
ment; for thus far these improvements
have been chiefly confined to other sections
of the State. And in vain will we look
for a solution of this problem, unless we
remember that for several years past, the
enterprising citizens of this section of the
State have been devoting themselves with
a commendable zeal to the subject of agri-
cultural improvement; and by a proper
application of compost, manure, and other
manures, and the use of other means which
a knowledge of this branch of education
has placed at their command, they have
redeemed and made productive and val-
uable lands heretofore worn out by an im-
proper mode of cultivation, and conse-
quently abandoned by the farmer as worth-
less and unfit for agricultural purposes.

The propriety of governmental action
on this subject has at different periods
forced itself upon the attention of your
predecessors, but no general system has
at any time been devised for its promotion.
In the session 1839 and '40 a "Board of
Agriculture" was established, which failed
of success in consequence of the fact
that in a mistaken spirit of economy no
means were supplied to defray its ex-
penses. At the last session of the General
Assembly an act was passed authorizing
the appointment of an agricultural com-
missioner and chemist, and assigning to
him duties of a most important and inter-
esting character. From this, much prac-
tical benefit was anticipated by the friends
of the measure. But the Legislature ad-
journed without electing a commissioner,
and no other mode was provided for his
appointment. It is known that the labors
of your present session will be complica-
ted and arduous; if, therefore, it should
be found impractical to devise and perfect
any more general and permanent scheme
for the advancement of agricultural science
I would respectfully recommend the elec-
tion of an agricultural commissioner in
pursuance of the act above referred to, and
suggest the propriety of amending said
act so as to authorize said commissioner
to establish agricultural societies in such
counties as he may visit in the discharge
of his duties.

The subject of primary and free schools
has for many years, more or less, occupied
the attention of the Legislature; yet the
practical operation of the present system
shows that it is inefficient and radically
defective. These defects have been so fre-
quently pointed out, that it is unnecessary
to reiterate them here; but, in view of the
additional revenue that will accrue to the
educational fund under a provision of the
new constitution, it is believed that a new
energy might be imparted to this branch
of our State policy, without detriment to
any other interest. I beg leave, therefore,
to call your attention to this subject, and
ask for that consideration its importance
demands.

It will doubtless be gratifying to you
to learn that the higher schools and colleges
throughout the Commonwealth are in a
prosperous and improving condition.

I transmit herewith the annual reports
of the rector and visitors of the University,
and of the board of visitors of the Virginia
Military Institute, which represent these
institutions to be in a very flourishing con-
dition, and ask for their respectful
consideration. Provision has heretofore
been made for the maintenance and edu-
cation, in each of these institutions, of one
young man from each senatorial district in
the State. The number of districts having
been increased, it might be well to con-
sider whether provision should not be
made for the accommodation, and the neces-
sary means provided for the support of
this to be educated; and I beg leave to
call your earliest attention to this subject.

The annual reports of the board of vis-
itors of the Deaf, Dumb and Blind Insti-
tution, of the Eastern and Western Lunatic
Asylums, and of the adjunct general, are
herewith submitted for your favorable
notice.

The bank returns herewith communi-
cated, exhibit a sound and healthy condi-
tion of these institutions.

The annual report on the Penitentiary
exhibits the manufacturing operations as
profitable to the State. The balance on
manufacturing account was \$6,076 77, and
after deducting the commissions of the agent
and expenses of the same, (\$8,076 70), the
net balance was \$2,399 97. The profits,
however, have fallen off, and the ag-
ents was able to pay \$6,000 into the treas-
ury. The diminution of profit within the
last two years is attributed to the changes
made in the criminal law in 1845. Pre-
vious to the revival of that year persons
were not confined in the penitentiary for
less than three years, and were consequent-
ly able to make their labor useful to the
establishment. Under the new law 25

per cent. of the prisoners are sentenced for
one year, 50 per cent. for less than three.
The average number received in the last
five years, under former laws, was 44 an-
nually, while under the present code the
number run up to 91, and the actual aver-
age to 59, being an increase of thirty per
cent. in three years. It is believed by the
superintendent, from these facts, that
crime is increasing under the existing laws,
that short imprisonments are less effective,
and the labor of the prisoners less profit-
able. Examples are given of the increase
of imprisonment from 1813 to 1823 of 100
per cent., while similar punishments pre-
vailed, and afterwards, when the policy
was changed, imprisonments diminished
41 per cent., up to 1847. It appears, also,
that in five and a half years, from 1816 to
1821, the clear loss on manufacturing ac-
count amounted to \$8,543 95 per annum,
while in five years, from 1844 to 1849, the
clear gain was \$1,960 74. In the last two
years, under the new law, the aggregate
clear gain was only \$795 36. The board
of directors and superintendent thereof
concur in recommending an increase in
the minimum terms of confinement as the
best remedy. While the moral effect upon
the community and the reformation of
offenders are the first great objects of the
system, a proper economy should be con-
sidered; and if the punishment can be so
adjusted as to attain the first great objects
and refund the expenses of the establish-
ment, the public interest will be doubly
promoted.

The increased numbers of our free col-
ored population, as exhibited by the late
census, is conclusive proof that the legis-
lation of our State in relation to this in-
fortunate and anomalous class, though dic-
tated by the soundest principles of philan-
thropy, has failed of its objects; and
unless a policy, more energetic and effi-
cient in its operation, be devised, it is
feared that this population, which has al-
ready grown to be an evil, will increase.
Whilst the census of 1850 shows that the
increase of our white population, during
the ten years preceding, was 21 per cent.,
and that of our slaves was 51 per cent.,
it exhibits the startling fact, that our free
colored population, during the same peri-
od, has increased at the rate of 72 5 per
cent.—and that too, during the operation
of those laws which were designed to rid
us of this unprofitable class of our people.
To drive them from the State by law, with-
out assistance or providing them with a home,
would be oppressive and harsh; and yet
to permit the evil to grow still greater, is
forbidden as well by considerations of hu-
manity as it is contrary to the dictates of
wisdom and sound policy.

This question was deemed of sufficient
importance to make it the subject of con-
stitutional action, but it is obvious that
further legislation is necessary; and I beg
leave, therefore, respectfully to bring it to
your attention, to ask for it, as it deserves,
your most serious consideration.

The State credit is usually good, and no
difficulty, which has not been overcome,
has been encountered in procuring money
to carry on the extensive improvements in
progress. Nor is any such difficulty ap-
prehended in the future. State bonds are
now selling at the treasury for a premium
of three per cent., and in the other money
markets of the country at even higher a
price. The rise in the price of State stocks
during the past year, may be attributed to
the wise provisions in the new constitu-
tion, tending to prevent in the future rash
and lavish appropriations of money to be
raised by loans, and for a sinking fund to
extinguish, in a short period, the existing
debt, as well as to the change authorized
by law in the form of the bonds, and in
the place for the payment of the interest
thereon. Until last winter state stocks
registered in the Second Auditor's office,
and transferable on the books thereof by
the person by whom they were issued, or his
attorney, only could be sold; nor could
the interest on such stock be paid else-
where in the United States than at the
State treasury. The coupon bonds author-
ized to be issued by the General Assembly
at its last session, being transferable by
delivery only, were better suited to the com-
mercial markets of the United States and to
commercial communities generally. This
change in the form of the bond, and the
power to agree to pay the interest on it
anywhere, enabled the Board of Public
Works to make sale of these stocks beyond
the limits of the Commonwealth.

The actual debt of the State was, on the
1st of January, 1852, about \$11,921,035 30;
this debt, under the operation of the pro-
visions of the constitution in relation to
the sinking fund, will be extinguished in
about thirty-three years; and any new
debts contracted after the first day of Jan-
uary, 1852, under the same provisions of
the constitution, will be paid at the end of
thirty-four years from the creation thereof.
The exertions to be made for the purpose
of paying the existing and future debts
will doubtless be very sensibly felt by the
country. The revenue raised by taxation
must needs be increased at least fifty per
cent., unless the internal improvements of
the State, of which the State is either the
part or sole owner, can be made much
more productive than they have heretofore
been. That the internal improve-
ments of the State may be made more pro-
ductive by judicious appropriations thereto,
either for the completion of those that are
unfinished or for the removal of other em-
barrassments thereof, and by better man-
agement of these improvements, I cannot
doubt. As it is the will of the people of
Virginia that the State debt shall be paid,
and that speedily, surely the internal im-
provements of the State, to make which
the debt was chiefly contracted, should be
made to pay as much thereof, as may be,
as the current interest thereon, as may be.
And I must say in this connection, that I
think appropriations of this time, for inter-
nal improvements which will not in all
probability become dividend paying im-
provements, are not advisable. The State
of Virginia owns at this time \$7,256,416 13
of productive, and \$8,167,502 03 of unpro-
ductive stocks. As before indicated, this
last class of stocks ought not at this time
to be increased. It is worthy of remark
here, that the dividends and interest on
the productive funds, with the addition of

the bonds on bank capital, is estimated, in
the accompanying report of the Second
Auditor, to yield \$940,386 57—a sum e-
quivalent to 6 per cent. on nine millions
of dollars.

It appears from the First Auditor's es-
timates that the deficiency of the revenue
at the end of this fiscal year will be \$815,
\$11 93, if seven per cent. on the debt con-
tracted and to be contracted prior to the
1st day of July next be set apart out of
the revenue of this fiscal year; this defi-
ciency will have to be thrown upon the
revenues of future years. If the General
Assembly, however—and I think it will
be wise and constitutional to do so—pay
only the current interest of the year, as
heretofore, and satisfy the further requi-
sition of the constitution as to a sinking fund
out of the revenues of 1852—3, which will
come into the treasury in December next,
then the deficiency at the treasury on the
1st day of October next, will be only
\$321,552 56; and a tax, which will bring
in a revenue to the wants of the govern-
ment, under the new Constitution, can be
devised at this session of the General As-
sembly.

The subject of internal improvement,
which for many years has engaged the an-
xious attention of our people, is rapidly in-
creasing in interest and importance, and
will require your most serious and careful
consideration. Whether we look to the
vast amount of capital already invested by
the State in the enterprise, or the appor-
tionalities yet required to carry out suc-
cessfully the schemes already begun, and
thereby make them available for revenue
and State purposes—or consider the mag-
nitude of the objects sought to be obtained,
and the importance of the results antici-
pated from their completion in the aid
they will give in developing the mineral
and agricultural resources, and the manu-
facturing and commercial advantages of
our State—all will see and be forced to
acknowledge the importance of the sub-
ject, and the great and growing necessity
for energetic and yet judicious action on
your part in relation to it. Indeed the
works of internal improvement already
commenced and in course of construction,
and upon which large sums of both public
and private means have been expended, are
so intimately connected with the leading
interests of the Commonwealth, that every
year's delay in the completion will neces-
sarily postpone, at a common loss to the
whole people, great and incalculable bless-
ings, and for an equal period of time defer
to the State treasury that replenish which
the heavy appropriations heretofore made
for internal improvement purposes so ear-
nestly demanded, and which their final com-
pletion cannot fail to effect. Many of our
sister States, with less capacity for such
enterprises, and possessing natural resources
and advantages far inferior to our own
have, under circumstances of great embar-
rassment, executed works of internal im-
provement which would do honor to the
enterprises of independent nations. Nor
have they been disappointed in the indi-
vidual or State benefit which their works
were expected to impart. The citizens of
these States feel the superiority of this im-
proved condition of their country, and duly
appreciate the increased comforts de-
rived from them.

Our generous and noble old Common-
wealth has been tardy in the execution of
these improvements most clearly indica-
ted by the geological structure of the coun-
try, and in a proper development of her
great physical resources. It is gratifying to
consider, that profiting by the example of
others, she may gain much of the less in
time, by wise, prompt and energetic mea-
sures hereafter.

Whilst the financial condition and credit
of the State, at home and abroad, must be
most carefully guarded, I feel it a duty
in all frankness to suggest for your consid-
eration, the speedy completion of such of
the great leading improvements as appear
most deeply involved with the general in-
terests of the Commonwealth. An en-
lightened policy would dictate, and stern
necessity demands, that these improve-
ments should be completed as speedily as
possible, and that no new projects requir-
ing extensive aid from the State should be
commenced until this great object shall
have been accomplished. Virginia has
entered the lists with her sister States for
the benefit of the trade with the great
West and the Valley of the Mississippi.
The prize for which we contend is worthy
of an exertion of all our energies. Let
some well digested system be adopted and
success will crown our efforts. It is can-
dently believed, however, that indiscrimi-
nate appropriations at this time for works
of any local advantage would be fraught
with most mischievous and dangerous re-
sults.

At the threshold of the subject we are met
with the difficulties which surround the affairs
of the long delayed central improvement—an
improvement contemplated prior to the Amer-
ican revolution; and one so strongly indicated
by the geographical position of the State, as
well as the geological structure of the country,
that it has never ceased to be an object of deep
solicitude to the Virginia Commonwealth. It
would be an act of supererogation to argue at
this time the merits or the importance to
the State of the great line from tide water on James
river to the Ohio. If, indeed, it were original-
ly without merit, the expenditure of ten millions
of dollars in the last thirty years for its im-
provement, would be an interest there, which
we could not disregard. But the extent and
value of the works completed, the original im-
portance of the scheme, and the sums for which
the State is already responsible on account of
the improvement, give it an importance in our
deliberations which we cannot disguise if we
would. But how far it is superior to the affairs
of the long delayed central improvement, the
water line, is a question upon which an honest
difference of opinion may well exist among the
most enlightened and patriotic statesmen.—

While I have no disposition to disparage the
benefits of a canal, I am not insensible to the
many advantages which a well constructed
railroad possesses over any artificial water im-
provement; nor do I feel it necessary to discuss
the relative advantages or disadvantages of the
two species adapted to this line; other than in
their practical relation to existing circum-
stances. From many imposing examples, it has
heretofore been urged with zeal and ability, that
railroads have become necessary appendages to
the canals upon most of the great lines of
travel and transportation. If this view be cor-
rect, and if we have duly estimated the mag-
nitude of the service which the business of the
James river and Kanawha line will not very
remote period of time require, we may well

imagine that both species of improvement may
be demanded, and when that time shall have
arrived both can be safely and advantageously
constructed. But until one or the other shall
have been carried through the entire line, and
a large amount of travel attracted to it, a strong
necessity for both cannot exist.

A canal across the mountains would satisfy
the present demand for the transportation of
produce, but the railroad would, in addition,
accommodate a large amount of travel, the
transportation of the mail and live stock, and
consequently ensure a speedy and ample re-
muneration for the cost of construction. In-
volved as we are, the shortest time within
which a remunerating revenue can be produced,
is a proper subject for consideration; and if an
insuperable objection to such a course exists,
first attained, should be first executed. But in
the exception, the work should be so constructed
as not to preclude the construction of the
other, along or near the same line, should it
ever be deemed expedient to do so.

With these general views of the subject, I
feel much confidence in recommending the con-
struction of the water line to Clifton Forge, or
to the nearest point upon the proposed line,
at which a junction can be formed with the Cen-
tral railroad, and that the Legislature make
provision in the most suitable manner to com-
plete the work at an early day. The report of
the President of the James river and Kanawha
company, heretofore charged with the important
improvement, exhibits the entire income of all
their works, in eleven months ending the 30th